

The Advisor



The Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq's Official Weekly Command Information Reporter - January 15, 2005
www.mnstci.iraq.centcom.mil

IRAQI AIR FORCE

18,000 Meals A Day

Mech Brigade Ready for Elections

MNSTC-I

Commanding General:
Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus
U.S. Army

Command Sergeant Major:
Command Sgt. Major
Claudio R. Brown
U.S. Marine Corps

Public Affairs Officer:
Capt. Steve Alvarez
U.S. Army

Deputy Public Affairs Officer:
Capt. Tim Jeffers
U.S. Army

Operations NCO/
Community Relations:
Sgt. 1st Class Allen R. Thomas
U.S. Army

Editor:
Tech. Sgt. Andrew Hughan
U.S. Air Force

The Advisor is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Defense Department and multinational partners.

Contents of this paper are not necessarily the official views of the U.S. government, multinational partners or the U.S. Dept. of Defense. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the Public Affairs Office of the Multinational Security Transition Command - Iraq.

Questions and comments should be directed to the public affairs office:

pao@mnstci.iraq.centcom.mil

To subscribe to **The Advisor**,
Visit us online at:

www.mnstci.iraq.centcom.mil/advisor

Training the ISF, Tough, But Worth It

By Jim Garamone

American Forces Press Service

BAGHDAD, Iraq – The U.S. Army general in charge of training Iraqi forces said here Jan. 10 that the job is tough, but it is a mission that must be accomplished before coalition forces can leave Iraq.

And, U.S. Army Lt. Gen. David Petraeus, added, progress is being made.

Petraeus commands the Multinational Security Transition Command - Iraq. The group, which includes the Army Reserve's 98th Training Division, is working to train and equip the Iraqi security forces. About 2,000 coalition service members are in the unit, as well as 700 coalition police who help train the Iraqi police. The unit works with the Iraqi ministries of Defense and Interior.

Iraqis must provide for their own security, Petraeus said. The coalition cannot impose a peace on Iraq, nor can force make democracy flourish. "It's like a cattle drive: you have to keep them moving," he said in an interview. "There will be losses, but you have to keep moving."

The Iraqi army is growing in strength and experience, he said, with many units gaining invaluable combat experience fighting alongside coalition forces. But the general didn't sugarcoat the situation; he acknowledged there are problems. Iraqi soldiers go through basic training, the equivalent of advanced individual training and then train with their units. "Then the units go into combat," he said.

It would be tough on any unit, the general said, and with recruits and their families threatened by insurgents, it becomes that much tougher.

And building an army, he explained, isn't limited to equipping and training infantry units. "We are building an entire infrastructure," Petraeus said. All of the things U.S. soldiers take for granted – clerks, cooks and medics – must be established.

But the Iraqis aren't left to themselves. Ten-man coalition teams serve with Iraqi units, advising them on tactics and training and helping with communications.

There are 20 battalions in the Iraqi army today. A total of 27 will join the service by the end of February. The Iraqi National Guard and its 42 battalions also are being integrated into the army. Specialized Iraqi army units also are forming and undergoing training, including a special operations unit, a counter-terrorism unit and a mechanized brigade.

The Iraqi police force is a prime target for insurgents. Hundreds of Iraqi police have been killed in terrorist attacks. "If they didn't matter, then they wouldn't be important targets," Petraeus said. There are now 53,000 Iraqi police trained and equipped, and the police academies will start graduating 4,000 officers each month.

Petraeus said there are tough days, when insurgents kill or maim many Iraqis and coalition personnel. But Americans must remember to see beyond the attacks, he added, and focus on the progress being made.

The general said the coalition just has to keep pushing to continue the cattle drive. It's what the Iraqis deserve and the region expects, he said.

Iraqi Mechanized Brigade Assumes Mission

By U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Andrew Hughan
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq - The Iraqi army took another step forward in the security of their nation this week by mobilizing the 1st Mechanized Brigade, an armor unit. Based in Taji, the unit conducted its first operational mission this week with two presence patrols using both MTLB vehicles and T55 tanks. The brigade also assumed part of the security mission at the Ministry of Defense by stationing MTLBs on the MOD grounds.

According to U.S. Army Col. David Styles, the Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq armor project officer, the brigade has three primary missions: conduct counter-insurgency operations to provide for a secure and stable Iraq, act as the nucleus of larger formations to facilitate the creation and expansion to a mechanized division and to be Iraq's future mobile reserve.

The brigade soldiers have been conducting basic skills training at the individual, squad and platoon level for weeks. The training includes physical, weapons, urban operations, traffic control point, patrol, and maintenance training that incorporates the capabilities of their mechanized and armored vehicles. Training also includes civil affairs operations as the brigade will be interacting extensively with the people of Iraq.

"They patrolled the local area around Taji both mounted and dismounted with the Calvary. They walked the local markets and interacted with the people," Col. Styles said. "They received a lot of cheers and thumbs up, overall reaction of the local population appeared very positive."

As election day approaches security around the country is increasing dramatically, the brigade is working along side other



Two BMP-1 from the Iraqi 1st Mechanized Brigade prepare to move to the Ministry of Defense.

Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Andrew Hughan
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

Iraqi units for election security.

"The mission of the brigade is to protect the Iraqi people and to protect the security of the country against all Iraqi enemies," said Iraqi Staff Brig. Gen. Kasim Jasim Nazal, 1st Brigade's commander.

According to MNSTC-I officials the brigade will be



Iraqi army Staff Brig. Gen. Kasim Jasim Nazal, commander of the Iraqi 1st Mechanized Brigade directs a BMP-1 into position at the Ministry of Defense. The 1st Brigade took over part of the security of the MOD from the Coalition this week.

Photo by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Andrew Hughan
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

positioned at locations deemed critical to the security of the election process and will be there as long as necessary to support the elections. The unit's unique armor and mobility will enhance security at selected sites.

"The brigade is at the Ministry to protect it and all the election centers," Gen. Nazal said. "We are also going to keep Baghdad secure and protect the main gates of the city; the brigade will be very visible on election day."

The brigade, Styles said, will display a new strength and capability to the Iraqi people that will provide a sense of pride in their Army, it will serve as a reason for hope in the future security of their country, he added.



Iraqi soldiers from the 1st Mechanized Brigade set up a vehicle check point near Taji with an MTLB.

Photo courtesy MNSTC-I CMATT

Police Recruiting Drive South of Baghdad Draws 1,100

*By 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit
Public Affairs*

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq – Nearly 1,100 Iraqis converged on a police recruiting center south of Baghdad Jan. 13 to compete for 100 jobs at police stations throughout northern Babil Province.

The large turnout came as a pleasant surprise to the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, which teamed with local police chiefs to build the local police force. A recruiting call is conducted about once a month and the number of applicants is usually just enough to meet the need.

Marines attribute the surge to increased interest of prominent area sheiks in assuming a greater security and stability role within the province.

U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Matt Sasse, operations officer for Battalion Landing Team, 1st Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment – the MEU's ground combat element – said he believes the Marines' aggressive efforts to defeat an insurgent-driven campaign of intimidation and terror are paying off.

"These individuals felt safe enough to come here and obviously safe enough to become Iraqi policemen," he said. "Eleven hundred is a huge number for 100 slots."

Insurgents have in recent months targeted the fledgling Iraqi Security Forces. In northern Babil, insurgents scored a string of successes last summer before the 24th MEU, which arrived in July, helped Iraqi forces turn things around.

Repeated attempts to destroy the Rashid station north of Mahmudiyah failed. The most recent came Dec. 12, when Iraqi police and Iraqi National Guardsmen decisively repelled a coordinated attack by at least 10 militants using mortars,

Iraqi Police graduate 1,600 from basic and specialized training

*By U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Andrew Hughan
MNSTC-I Public Affairs*

BAGHDAD, Iraq – The Iraqi Police Service graduated more than 1,600 officers from Basic Police Training and four specialized policing courses this week as the Iraqi government continues the police force training effort in the country.

The Jordan International Police Training Center in Amman, Jordan graduated 1,440 new officers, the Adnan Training Facility, Baghdad, 80 specialized course students, and 99 graduated from the Al Kut Regional Training Academy.

IPS basic training runs recruits through instruction in the fundamental basics of policing skills and the techniques and ideals of law enforcement

in a free society.

The specialized policing courses include basic criminal investigation, police mid-level leadership, incident command system and police internal controls.

The one or two week specialty courses are intended to augment the eight-week basic police training new recruits undergo prior to service and the three-week training course for prior service officers.

Officers attending the courses came from areas throughout Iraq and will return to the respective stations for continued duty immediately following graduation.

rocket-propelled grenades, machine guns and assault rifles. In a subsequent sweep of the area, 34 suspected insurgents were rounded up.

The successful defense of the Rashid station represented an important psychological victory for the local ISF, who were not yet strong enough earlier this year to prevent the insurgents' destruction of police stations in other south-central cities and towns, including Iskandariyah, Jurf as Sakhr, Haswah and Lutafiyah, according to U.S. Marine Corps Capt. David Nevers, a spokesman for the 24th MEU.

Over the past six months, Marines and the Iraqis they're supporting have spread out across northern Babil province and southern Baghdad, establishing joint patrol bases in previously labeled no-go zones for U.S. and Iraqi forces.

With sustained presence and reinforcing firepower provided by the Marines, the ISF are thriving, Nevers said. Local police, in particular, are growing increasingly confident and capable.

In recent weeks, police in northern Babil investigated and recovered a stolen fire truck in Eskan, joined the Marines in searches for weapons and ordnance, stepped up their unilateral patrolling, began manning checkpoints alongside the ING in Tounis and recovered missing equipment belonging to Multi-National Forces.

Though kidnapping and murders have led to some attrition, local involvement as well as joint cooperation and training with the MEU resulted in rising recruitment and improved morale for the ISP.

Pvt. Murphy
By Master Sgt. Mark Baker



300 Iraqis Line Up For Chance To Join Police Force

U.S. Army Pfc. Mike Pryor
82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq - The line of people stretching out the doors of the Baghdad Convention Center recently wasn't for tickets to a concert or a major sporting event. It was for the chance to become an Iraqi police officer.

Approximately 300 Iraqis from all over the country showed up at the convention center Jan. 11 to take part in the tryout process, which was administered jointly by the Iraqi Police Service and Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division, the 82nd Airborne Division, and other units.

Similar tryouts are held once every month, said U.S. Army Spc. Samantha Samora, 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion. Each month, a goal is set for a certain number of recruits to be selected. The goal set for the Jan. 11 tryouts was 185 new recruits, but due to the strong turnout, they were on pace to finish with more than 200, Samora said.

The tryouts began outside with a physical fitness test that included push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups and a run. A fitness test is not an unusual thing for the Soldiers who were present as testers, but it apparently came as a surprise for the would-be recruits. Many of them arrived in dress shoes and slacks and had no athletic wear to change into. But they didn't let that stop them. The men kicked off their shoes and socks and ran barefoot when they had to. Some even went further than that.

"That guy is definitely highly motivated," said U.S. Army Pfc. Brendan Lind, a paratrooper with Company C, 3rd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, as a man jogged past him wearing nothing but his underwear.

Once the testing began, some of the men breezed through the events, while others struggled. Chasim Mijbel, who with his red, curly hair resembles the actor Will Ferrell, became a favorite of the Soldiers grading the events. When it was his turn at the pull-up bar they all cheered him on. Unfortunately, Mijbel was unable to complete the required number of repetitions. He was sent to the back of the line for a retest.

As he waited nervously for his next attempt, Mijbel explained his failure by saying that he hadn't known about the physical fitness test beforehand and hoped his chance to become a police officer hadn't slipped away.

"I want to secure this country and fight the terrorists, I will sacrifice with my life to save this country," he said.

Perhaps inspired by his own bold words, Mijbel strode to the pull-up bar and executed the exact number of pull-ups he needed to pass.

Afterwards, Mijbel and everyone else who passed the fitness test were escorted inside the convention center into a large auditorium. They took seats and were each handed a sheet of paper, the literacy test portion of the tryout.

The test consisted of a short written passage in Arabic and 10 questions about the passage, explained Mr. Sarmad J. Danno, a U.S. Army translator who was grading the tests. To pass, each applicant had to answer seven of the 10 questions correctly, Danno said.

The next segment of the tryout was a security check. Iraqi police agents and Soldiers asked the applicants a series of

questions about their backgrounds and allegiances.

After that came a medical exam, screening out those with disqualifying illnesses. Those who got the OK from the doctors went to see Samora, who completed the final paperwork making them official Iraqi Police Service recruits.

When the day was done, more than 240 new recruits had been chosen. Mustafa Khalid was one of them.

"Even as a child I always wanted to be a police officer," Khalid said after his tryout was over. "It is my dream."

MNSTC-I Equipment Update

The Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq issued the following equipment to the Iraqi security forces in the past week.

Ammunition	2,784,080 rounds
Helmets	3,659
AK 47s	3,459
Body Armor	1,000
Pistols	1,140
PKM Machine Gun	168
Vehicles	61

Special Forces Produce

The Iraqi Special Operations Forces recently celebrated their first anniversary. During this past year they executed 538 combat missions, captured 431 insurgents, and recovered more than 1700 weapons, and tons of munitions.

Chartered to operate throughout Iraq, these units fought in Najaf, Fallujah, Ramadi, Samarra and Baghdad. Comprised of personnel from all over Iraq, they are dedicated to providing a secure and stable future for their country.

The Advisor

Space permitting, MNSTC-I Public Affairs will reprint your e-mails, letters to the editor and/or article submissions. Appropriate submissions include the important developments in your section or unit that would be of interest to our readers. Please write to: pao@mnstci.iraq.centcom.mil

Iraqi Air Force Takes Off With Aircraft Delivery

*By Capt. Tim Jeffers
MNSTC-I Public Affairs*

UNDISCLOSED LOCATION, Iraq Coalition and Iraqi military leaders gathered at a secure air facility in Iraq to celebrate the activation of the 23rd Iraqi Air Force Squadron. The United States gifted three C-130E cargo planes to Iraq in an effort to jump-start Iraqi airlift capabilities. The large, airplanes were recently overhauled including a new exterior paint job touched-off with Iraqi flags on the tail sections.

The 23rd Iraqi Transport Squadron was originally activated July 14, 1965, at Al Rasheed Air Base. Its primary mission was and will continue to be transporting military personnel and equipment. Approximately 65 Iraqi Air Force personnel, including four crews, have completed a four-month lead-in course in Jordan and will now be trained to fly and maintain the new airplanes.

A standard crew on a C-130 is five: two pilots, a navigator, radio operator and loadmaster. Flight

training will continue with assistance from the Coalition Military Assistance Training Teams assigned to this mission. U.S. Air Force Capt. Daniel A. DeVoe, an advisor support team member from the 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, is looking forward to the challenge.

"We are making progress. Although Iraqi crews have not flown these airplanes yet, the familiarization process is going well," DeVoe said. Additional training will be provided to the Iraqi airmen in the United States on flight simulators.

Prior to the start of the ceremony, Iraqi Air Force personnel followed Iraqi custom by slaughtering five sheep in honor of the occasion. Blood from the sheep was collected and used to mark the sides of the planes as well as the occasion. Bloody hand prints could be seen on every plane. The sacrifice was offered in celebration of the new beginning of the Iraqi Air

Force and usually signifies a "good omen" and is symbolic of being under God's protection, explained an Iraqi at the ceremony. Later the lamb would be prepared and served to the Iraqi airmen as a meal.

Coalition and Iraqi delegations attendees included U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. Walter E. Buchanan, Combined Forces Air Component commander, U.S. Army Brig. Gen. James Schwitters, CMATT commanding general, Iraqi Lt. Gen. Nasir Al Abadi, deputy chief of staff, Iraqi Armed Forces and Maj. Gen. Kamal Al Barzanjy, Iraqi Air Force commander.

In his remarks, Buchanan said, "Today is a good day for the Iraqi Air Force as you begin to write a new chapter in the proud legacy of Squadron 23. More importantly, today is a good day for the people of Iraq. I am delighted with the activation of the 23rd Squadron, but I am overjoyed by yet another step toward a free and fully sovereign



U.S. and Iraqi military members gathered to activate the 23rd Iraqi Air Force Squadron at a forward operating base. The three C-130 Hercules aircraft were donated to the Iraqis by the U.S. Air Force. The mission of the 23rd is transportation of personnel and cargo around Iraq. Photos by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Andrew Hughan MNSTC-I Public Affairs



One of the three C-130 Hercules aircraft donated by the U.S. Air Force to the 23rd Iraqi Air Force Squadron.

Iraq.”

Royal Air Force Wing Cmdr. Steve Shell said it was a proud day for his Iraqi colleagues. “These aircraft will make a big difference to the Air Force contribution to independent operations,” he said.

Abadi was also a featured speaker at the ceremony and exchanged gifts with Buchanan at the conclusion of the brief ceremony. Abadi praised the cooperation and support of Coalition Forces and personally thanked a number of them.

“I would like to thank Coalition Forces for their generosity and helping to put Iraq back on its feet. We are announcing today the reactivation and reestablishment of Squadron 23, and we extend our best wishes to our Air Force.”

Once all training is completed Squadron 23 will move operations to Al Muthana Air Base in Baghdad where maintenance, staff and support facilities are being readied. In due course, they will be joined by Squadron 3, which has fixed wing and helicopter assets.

The ceremony ended with the band playing while the unit guidon was unveiled for the assembly. The



pennant, with yellow lettering, read: Squadron 23, and waved in the dusty breeze. According to one soldier who had inspected one of the planes, “It was the cleanest C-130 I have ever seen. Even the ladders were newly painted!”



Above left: Iraqi Lt. Gen. Nasir Al Abadi, deputy chief of staff, Iraqi Armed Forces addresses the crowd at the activation ceremony.

Above: U.S. Combined Air Forces Commander Walter Buchanan exchanges gifts with Iraqi Air Force Commander Maj. Gen. Kamal Barzanjy.

Kitchen Serves Thousands of Iraqi Soldiers

*Story and photos by U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Andrew Hughan
MNSTC-I Public Affairs*

AN NUMANIYAH, Iraq - The Iraqi army is growing rapidly, sometimes by several thousand at a time, and when new recruits enter basic training at An Numaniyah Military Training Base they need to be fed. A new consolidated kitchen here makes thousands of meals a day for the Iraqi recruits, employs hundreds of people from the surrounding town and puts more than \$1 million a year into the local community.

The recently opened kitchen replaces several satellite kitchens located in smaller buildings around the base. The new facility is centrally located and makes it easier for the staff to distribute hot food to the soldiers by preparing it in one location then placing it in trays and moving it to smaller dining halls.



An Iraqi chef prepares rice for the Iraqi soldiers at the consolidated kitchen facility at An Numiniyah. The kitchen prepares up to 18,000 meals a day.

“Originally this was going to be a dining facility and kitchen but the previous base commander decided that it’s easier to bring the food to the soldiers, rather than bringing the soldiers to the food,” said U.S. Navy Lt. j.g. Martin Ranalli, the An Numaniyah base engineering officer and Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq J-7 representative.

Having a central location is also safer for the soldiers and staff.

“We now believe that he was ahead of his time in his thinking because of the recent (dining facility) attack in Mosul, now we don’t have mass gatherings of troops in one area.”

Currently, the kitchen prepares 6,000 meals three times a day, averaging 18,000 daily meals with capacity growing. Additional equipment and electrical upgrades are being installed and soon 40,000 meals a day will be possible.

Every week more than 45 tons of food is delivered to the base. Five tons, including one and a half tons of rice, are used every day. The kitchen has more than 1,300 employees, chefs, maintenance, drivers and other kitchen staff, working around the clock to keep the Iraqi soldiers fed.

It is estimated the kitchen has a \$150,000 monthly impact on the community.

“This is a big kitchen, before we had to work in three kitchens, now it’s very good because we can cook all the meals at one time; the work is much easier now,” Noul Abu Salim, the Iraqi food production manager said. “We make Iraqi food here; rice, chicken or beef with sauce, spaghetti, macaroni or pasta every meal, we are very proud to make the food for the soldiers.”

Some of the supplies are purchased in town. All the kitchen labor is performed by Iraqis. An additional project under construction is a bakery, according to kitchen staff.

Bread is very important to the Iraqi culture and the dining facility serves it with every meal. Currently bread is being baked in town and served to soldiers. Once the new bakery is completed the small cement-mixer-like ovens, round and about three feet tall, will bake all the bread necessary for soldiers’ meals.

The dough is made in advance and flattened by hand to about eight inches across, then placed on the inside walls of the oven where it bakes in only three to four seconds and then is removed. Each oven can make 10,000 loaves of bread per day. When the bakery is running at full capacity they will make 70,000 loaves of bread a day.



These bread ovens are still under construction but when they are operating each oven will produce 10,000 loaves of bread a day for Iraqi army soldiers training at An Numiniyah Military Training Base.

The Mystery of Makkah and the Hajj

By Capt. Tim Jeffers
MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq - For those not familiar with Islam and the Quran, Muslim customs and religious practices are a real mystery. A faith practiced by roughly 1.3 billion people, Islam manages to confound the average Westerner.

One of the most famous aspects of the religion is the pilgrimage to Makkah (also known as Mecca). Makkah is an ancient city located in western Saudi Arabia, and is considered the holiest of cities by Muslims. Every year, millions of Muslims make a pilgrimage or "Hajj" to Makkah in strict accordance with their religion. It is one of the five pillars of Islam including: The testimony of faith, prayer, giving Zakat (support to the poor), fasting the month of Ramadan, and the Pilgrimage to Makkah.

If believers have lived their lives as faithful Muslims, and are spiritually prepared, the Hajj has the potential to be a memorable if not life-altering experience. The Kaaba or "House of God" is located inside the Masjid al Haram (Sacred Mosque), the place where all the pilgrims gather to begin their journey. Muslims believe the Kaaba was built by Abraham and his son Ishmael. The Haram Mosque is considered by Muslims as the holiest mosque on earth. In fact, all Muslims throughout the world pray in the direction of the Kaaba five times a day.

Believers, wearing ceremonial clothing called an irham (two sheets of white unhemmed cloth and sandals) are required to make the pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime, but only after having settled their worldly affairs. Clad in these simple garments, pilgrims appear equal before God, with all class distinctions and cultural identifiers removed.

The Hajj is a journey of faith which incorporates a series of ritual acts designed to remind the pilgrim of their mortality. With the appropriate spiritual preparation, the experience is designed to create a state of mind which transforms the individual. A Muslim's entire life leads up to this symbolic journey toward death.

Great mystery continues to surround this ancient rite of Hajj and Makkah itself. The mystery is no accident. Islamic law prohibits non-Muslims from entering the city.

Every able-bodied Muslim who can afford to make the trip to Makkah is required to do so at least once in their lifetime. The Hajj itself is reportedly a physically grueling experience, but one that pilgrims say is the greatest spiritual experience of their lives.

The pilgrimage takes place during the twelfth month in the Islamic calendar known as Thu Al-Hijjah. The Hajj is divided into two separate experiences: the Lesser Hajj or "umrah" and the Greater Hajj or "Al Hajjul Akbar. The umrah can be performed at anytime during the year and is considered an optional rite. The Al Hajjul Akbar must be performed during the month of Dhu Al-Hijjah, and is considered an obligatory rite. Because of the time and expense associated with the trip to Makkah, most pilgrims (Hajjis) embark on both journeys, in succession, during their visit.

The umrah in large part is a reenactment of important events in the life of Muhammad. Muhammad is considered the messenger of God and foremost prophet in Islam. Once

completed, the pilgrim usually travels to Medina to visit the Mosque of the Prophet. After spending a day or two there, the Hajj continues as each pilgrim begins a three to five day journey to the hill of Arafat. There, many pilgrims offer prayers and contemplate their lives. They then travel to the small village of Muna where they participate in some rituals. Following the Muna rituals pilgrims often shave their heads to demonstrate a spiritual rebirth and cleansing of their sins.

Finally, the pilgrims perform a "tawaf" which is also part of the Lesser Hajj or umrah. It consists of walking around the Kaaba seven times in a counterclockwise direction. Once the Hajj is completed, pilgrims may attend a festival and then return to their homes, towns and villages to be honored by their fellow Muslims and become, in some cases, spiritual celebrities.

The Hajj it is a unique experience for each pilgrim and a sacred mystery for each participant and for the faithful of the Islamic religion, Makkah, the holiest of cities, remains a life-long goal.

FORCE PROTECTION TIP

Improvised Explosive Device Preventative and Protective Measures

Unguarded containers in corridors or other public areas pose a serious threat to your personal safety, as they are a perfect host for IEDs

Dumping of garbage (boxes, etc.) for collection outside of your offices/trailers is not authorized. Keep the garbage within the confines of your offices/trailers until properly disposed of in approved containers.

Do not leave items such as backpacks, rucksacks, purses, or received mail unsecured at any time, especially in common areas.

Be alert for "out of place objects" such as rock piles, fresh dirt, dead animals, and any other objects out of place from the surrounding environment.

Report suspicious activity of local workers.

FINAL FRAMES

By U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Claudio Brown
MNSTC-I Command Sergeant Major

All things must pass. We all know that when we join a unit, we will eventually have to leave it. It is now my time to leave. The Marine Corps is calling me back. I must return to a unit that is, as we speak, deploying Marines to support the creation of a new, free Iraq. During my brief time as the command sergeant major I have had the honor to observe all of you as you worked to help rebuild the Iraqi armed forces. In my six months here, I have seen the Iraqi army grow from a single operational battalion, to 20 operational battalions, and nine divisions. By the end of February its final seven battalions will come on line.

Moreover, the Iraqi National Guard, and its 40 plus battalions also are being integrated into the army. Special operations unit, a counter terrorism unit, and a mechanized brigade will be also part of the continuum. I have seen you support and guide the development of a new model for an army in the Middle East. You can be proud of what you have accomplished so far, and what you will accomplish. You have had to work without a 'how to' manual, as no one in recent history has tried to rebuild a nation's military from scratch.

Sgt. Maj. Brown has done a magnificent job as MNSTC-I's senior NCO. He has repeatedly done what the best of those in such positions do -- take up his rucksack, hop on a convoy or aircraft, and spend lengthy periods with our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines out in the training bases, on convoy escort missions, and in combat operations. He has been a wonderful additional set of eyes and ears for the command group, and he has been a great source of unvarnished ground truth. It has been a pleasure and an honor to have had him as my wingman over the past six months.

*Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus
Commanding General
MNSTC-I*

Your dedication to the accomplishment of the mission has been outstanding, and I would like to thank you for your dedication. Unfortunately, some of the members of our command have given the last measure of devotion to duty, as we have lost personnel who were serving with the new Iraqi units. They did not die in vain, and you do not labor in vain, because of the profound change you and others are effecting in this country.

Your actions will fundamentally change the way the military operates and interacts with the civil society in Iraq. In a larger sense, your work will have a profound effect on the entire Middle East. The development of a military that is under civilian control and that protects the rights of the nation's citizens instead of suppressing them is unique in this region.

You will have a hand in this transformation, and the impact of your work will be felt for years to come. You have accomplished these feats despite adverse living and working conditions and the constant threat of enemy attack. Your willingness and ability to accomplish the mission, regardless of the odds, has made my job, and that of the commanding general, infinitely easier.

As I leave, I will hold in my mind and heart, the vision of a group of Americans and Coalition forces, who are working tirelessly to create a new beginning for Iraq. I want to thank you all for your support, and charge you to continue moving forward in your important work. I wish you all fair winds and following seas, good luck and success in the future. I am honored to have served with you. Remember, "We owe no less to the men and women who serve our unit."



"We measure progress by organizing, training, equipping, mentoring, and manning one Iraqi battalion at a time."

*U.S. Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. C.R. Brown
MNSTC-I Command Sergeant Major*